

Message Text

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42

ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ACDA-05 IO-10 OMB-01 CIAE-00

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R 141109Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1522

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

SECDEF WASHDC

CNO WASHDC

JCS WASHDC

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON

COMIDEASTFOR

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 4508

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, BA, IR

SUBJ: SHAH'S STATEMENT ON FOREIGN FORCES IN GULF

REF: MANAMA 0545

SUMMARY: ALTHOUGH GOI RHETORIC MAY BE EVOLVING TO MORE NEUTRAL OR INDEPENDENT POSTURE AS IRAN AND ARAB STATES MOVE TO IMPROVED AND MORE ACTIVE RELATIONSHIPS, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THERE WILL BE ANY REAL CHANGE IN IRAN'S DESIRE FOR CLOSE TIES WITH U.S. AND USN IN GULF. NEVERTHELESS, WE BELIEVE USG SHOULD RECOGNIZE CHANGING IRANIAN PUBLIC STANCE AND GIVE CAREFUL CONSIDERATION TO PROPOSED NAVAL ACTIVITIES OR USE OF IRANIAN FACILITIES WHICH MIGHT APPEAR TO CONFLICT WITH THAT STANCE. END SUMMARY.

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1. AS REPORTED IN WIRELESS FILE OF MAY 5, SHAH TOLD LONDON OBSERVER THAT HE WANTED "ANY PERMANENT AMERICAN MILITARY PRESENCE REMOVED FROM THE PERSIAN GULF AREA, INCLUDING THE AMERICAN NAVAL BASE IN

BAHRAIN." AT SAME TIME, SHAH SAID, "HE EXPECTS IRAQ TO AGREE TO A SIMILAR EXCLUSION OF SOVIET BASES IN THE GULF./ THIS IS A MORE EXPLICIT DESCRIPTION OF GOI POSITION ON GULF SECURITY THAN HAS NORMALLY BEEN PRESENTED--I.E., THAT IRAN BELIEVED SECURITY SHOULD BE IN HANDS OF LITTORAL STATES AND THAT THESE STATES SHOULD NOT DEPEND ON SUPER POWER SUPPORT. IRANIANS REGULARLY ADD THAT AS LONG AS LITTORAL STATES ARE UNABLE TO ASSURE OWN SECURITY IT IS INEVITABLE THAT THEY WILL HAVE TO LOOK TO OUTSIDERS AND AS LONG AS ONE SUPER POWER (USSR) IS PRESENT IN GULF OR INDIAN OCEAN, GOI WANTS OTHER (U.S.) TO REMAIN IN ORDER TO KEEP A STRATEGIC BALANCE. NEW ELEMENT IN OBSERVER ARTICLE IS SPECIFIC MENTION OF REMOVAL OF AMERICAN PRESENCE AT BAHRAIN. AS NOTED ABOVE SHAH HEDGED THIS POSITION BY SAYING IRAQ WOULD HAVE TO AGREE TO EXCLUSION OF SOVIET BASES IN GULF. STORY HAS NOT BEEN PLAYED BY LOCAL PRESS, SUGGESTING EITHER THAT PAPER'S QUOTATION OF SHAH IS NOT SANCTIONED AS GOI POLICY POSITION OR THAT GOI DOES NOT WANT TO HIGHLIGHT THE ISSUE ON THE EVE OF SHAH'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON. IT IS, OF COURSE, POSSIBLE THAT REPORTER MISQUOTED OR MISINTERPRETED THE SHAH.

2. WHATEVER THE EXPLANATION FOR THE STATEMENT, IN WAKE OF IRAN-IRAQ ACCORD AND MUTUAL IRANIAN-ARAB EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN TIES, WE BELIEVE WE MAY ANTICIPATE SOME SIMILAR MOVEMENT IN IRANIAN RHETORIC TOWARDS ARAB VIEW POINTS AND VICE VERSA. WE UNDERSTAND THAT BOTH SIDES ARE NOT ALLOWING NOMENCLATURE FOR GULF TO STAND IN WAY OF EXPRESSIONS OF COOPERATION--WHILE NEITHER, HOWEVER, IS YIELDING ITS RESPECTIVE POSITION ON PERSIAN OR ARAB DESIGNATION. ALTHOUGH GOI WILL BE CAUTIOUS IN ITS EVOLVING RELATIONS WITH IRAQIS AND OTHER ARABS, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT GOI MAY FIND ITSELF ENGAGED IN GULF SUMMITRY OR NEGOTIATIONS FOR NON-AGGRESSION PACTS OR OTHER SUCH DIPLOMATIC CONFIDENTIAL

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BUSINESS. CERTAINLY THE FLOW OF ARAB VISITORS TO TEHRAN SHOWN NO SIGN OF ABATING AND GOI SEEMS TO FIND PROCESS USEFUL, NOT THE LEAST FOR INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL REASONS.

3. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THESE CHANGES IN IRANIAN RHETORIC OR DIPLOMATIC MANIFESTATIONS WILL BRING ANY BASIC CHANGE OVER THE NEAR TERM IN SUBSTANCE OF IRANIAN POSITION ON REALITIES IN GULF, PARTICULARLY GOI'S PERCEIVED VALUE OF U.S. NAVY IN THIS REGION. IRAN IS COMMITTED TO DEVELOPMENT OF A BLUE WATER NAVY AND IS DEPENDING HEAVILY ON USN AOR ASSISTANCE IN THAT ENDEAVOR. SHAH HAS REMARKED ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS THAT HE PERSONALLY APPRECIATES THE READY AND EFFECTIVE COOPERATION OF THE

USN. WE DOUBT THAT HE WOULD TAKE INCONSISTENT AND UNFRIENDLY STEP OF ACTIVELY PUSHING FOR COMIDEASTFOR TO LEAVE BAHRAIN AND THE GULF, BUT HE IS TRYING TO CARRY WATER ON BOTH SHOULDERS. THEREFORE, SHAH MIGHT BE RELUCTANT NOW TO SEND EMISSARY TO BAHRAIN TO SUPPORT PRESENCE OF COMIDEASTFOR AS HE DID LAST YEAR OR TO OTHERWISE OPPOSE ITS DEPARTURE IF DEMANDED BY OTHER MAJOR LITTORAL STATES.

4. IN THESE CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES, WE BELIEVE THAT WE SHOJLD BE SENSITIVE TO SHAH'S PUBLIC POSITON ON GULF SECURITY, AND GIVE VERY CAREFUL CONSIDERATION TO THE FREQUENCY, DURATION AND PUBLIC EXPOSURE OF SHIP VISITS AND JOINT EXERCISES. ALSO, P-3 OPERATIONS AT BANDAR ABBAS SHOULD BE EXAMINED FOR THEIR CONTINUING UTILITY AND APPROPRIATENESS. THIS MORE COMPLICATED MATTER WILL BE SUBJECT OF A FORTHCOMING MESSAGE.
MIKLO

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